

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 7038
By Hargett

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Elmon Odell Baker of Memphis.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Elmon Odell Baker of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, Elmon Baker was an exemplary Tennessean and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Baker passionately believed in the democratic process; indeed, he is credited with personally registering nearly forty thousand people to vote through his extensive voter registration drives; and

WHEREAS, a Germantown resident and Memphis businessman, Elmon Baker moved to Memphis in 1945 and drove a bus for the Memphis Street Railway Company before he founded the Baker Furniture Company in 1950, after a life-transforming experience; in a 2004 interview, Mr. Baker credited a Dale Carnegie course, "How to Win Friends and Influence People," with bringing him out of his shell and helping him to recognize and act upon opportunities; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his important voter registration work, Mr. Baker was also an ardent promoter of Americanism and buying locally produced goods; he valued education and supported numerous charitable causes; one longtime friend noted, "What was remarkable about Odell was he did so many things to help other people behind the scenes...He never stopped working."; and

WHEREAS, Elmon Baker further demonstrated his commitment to service as a member of the Shriners and the Masons, and he was also active in the Germantown Charity Horse Show; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his peerless commitment to volunteerism, Mr. Baker was named by President George H. W. Bush as one of Memphis's Thousand Points of Light in 1990; Elmon Baker was named Lions Club of Germantown's 2005 Man of the Year, and he was posthumously honored by the Shelby County Republican Party with the Republicanism Award; and

WHEREAS, celebrated for his passionate commitment to voter registration, Elmon Baker was very conscious of the impact one person could have on the community; one Republican Party official said that while Mr. Baker was a fixture in Republican Party politics for many years, his voter registration efforts crossed all party lines, because he wanted everybody to vote; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Baker was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Elmon Baker enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife of sixty-two years, Madge Baker, and was the proud father of daughters, Cathy Baker, Janis Powell, and Lisa Turetzky; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Baker is also survived by his sister, Ella Archer, and seven adoring grandchildren and four great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Elmon Baker leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this champion of voter registration, exceptional businessman, public servant, and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Elmon Odell Baker, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Elmon Baker.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.